

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This amendment is submitted in response to the first Office Action of this RCE case. In the pending Office Action mailed June 6, 2006, claims 10-12 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103 for allegedly being obvious in view of Shoroff et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,023,744) and Blumenau (U.S. Pat. No. 6,631,442), in view of Igami et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,622,223). The rejected claims (claims 10, 11, 12, 21) have been amended. Claims 22-25 have been added. Thus, claims 10, 11, 12, 21-25 are pending. Entry of this amendment and further examination of this application, as amended, are requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserted that Shoroff shows detecting when remaining storage area has become less than a predetermined value, and asserted that "Blumenau discloses the mounting of a remote volume for the purpose of making it available for use by a local storage system."¹ The new reference to Igami was cited for detecting the free space in a memory buffer to determine if a particular file fits in the available memory. The present claims, however, are more particularly directed to determining when a remote volume mounting is possible in accordance with storage specifications. See, for example, Paragraph 0028-0031 of the published application (US2004/0103259). Paragraph 0028 states that "the remote disk array device 20 . . . decides whether it is possible to provide the remote unit 2a corresponding to [the] specification." None of the cited references can provide this feature. Shoroff does not relate to mounting volumes. Blumenau relates to reconfiguration of mounted volumes, and therefore does not describe mount decisions. Igami describes buffer operations, and does not relate to mounting volumes. The claims as amended reflect the difference from the proposed combination.

Claim 11 has been amended for making the difference more explicit, and now recites that "whether or not one or more spare disk units in said storage system is to be provided is decided . . ." (in this amendment, the word --provided-- replaces the word "used"). All of the

¹ It is noted that Blumenau only implicitly describes mounting of a remote volume for use by a local storage system. More particularly, Blumenau relates to dynamic reconfiguration of a volume that is already mounted (that is, after a volume is accessible to a computing device). See, for example, Blumenau at col. 2, lines 44-55 and col. 4, lines 53-63.

pending independent claims contain similar language. Claim 10 has been amended so it recites that the remote storage system determines if it is possible to provide said remote storage area in accordance with said size and speed, and if it is possible, provides said remote storage area having said size and said speed as the storage area for said storage system." Claim 12 and claim 21 both recite determining if it is possible to provide the remote storage area in accordance with the specification of the storage system.

New claim 22 recites an operation of "determining if it is possible for the remote storage system to provide a remote storage area in accordance with the designation command specifications of size and speed;" and then "performing a mount operation on one or more disk units at the remote storage system so that said remote mounted disk units serve as additional storage area for the storage system, in response to determining that it is possible to provide said remote storage area, and otherwise indicating that no mount operation could be performed." As noted above, these claims are supported by Paragraphs 0028-0031 of the published application. See also Paragraph 0046 (claim 25). The Shoroff patent does not provide such features, and neither Blumenau nor the newly cited reference to Igami provides such features. Thus, claims 22, 23, 24, and 25 are patentably distinguishable over the proposed combination.

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Amdt. dated August 7, 2006
Reply to Office Action of June 6, 2006

PATENT

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that all pending claims (claims 10, 11, 12, and 21-25) are patentable over the art of record and are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 858-350-6100.

Respectfully submitted,


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